1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

cattle have not broken into and eaten the produce, very little work is required in cultivating crops. Thus work on crop production is concentrated into less than six months leaving the rest of the year free for other activities.

Although almost all Kanuri households obtain some food and some cash from their farm plots, the amount of farming varies from person to person, from village to village, and even for the same person from season to season. In the city, many people have dropped farming and manage to earn enough cash income to furnish their needs from the market. In the villages some households, usually in areas of good soil and water supply, produce agricultural surpluses, while in other areas the farm work provides only part of the household needs. Again some farmers tend to produce fairly similar amounts of grain crops per year while others fluctuate, so that they produce practically nothing some years and large bounties a few years later. Increased prices of ground-nuts and guinea corn stimulate greater household farming activities while trade and other nonfarming activities may interfere with a man's farming. Sickness in the compound as well as blight and soil depletion tend to decrease agricultural proceeds, and finally in the rural areas increase or decrease in household size, especially in the number of wives, all tend to affect the fluctuation of crop proceeds from one household to another or within the same household over time. People who report themselves to be primarily farmers produce more than those who report themselves to be craftsmen, although for the Magumeri area the difference, when measured, does not seem to be very great. On the other hand, traders and political and religious specialists seem to produce approximately one quarter to one third as much on their farms as other people, and many in this category do not farm at all.

The importance of wives has already been noted. The number of wives available to any cultivator, as well as the number of his male subordinates in the household, is the major factor affecting crop production. The high divorce rate makes this primary source of labor somewhat unpredictable for each farmer. On the other hand it also helps to stabilize marriage. Thus the more men depend upon help from their wives the less likely they are to divorce them, although their efforts in this direction are never completely successful and the insecurity of farm help is always there. The insecurity can be alleviated by using sons or clients or laborers, all of whom require payment in some way for their help. All rural Kanuri at times help their neighbors, their relatives, or friends to farm and often a group of such men get together to help one another in a cooperative work gang and then reciprocate by helping each other in turn. Thus although many Kanuri do move around in Bornu, farming favors the most stable who can build up social relations in one place that can be utilized in the form of labor to offset the possible insecurity caused by the ever-present high divorce rate.

To make the situation more complicated many Kanuri are not rooted in the land emotionally. It is part of both the traditional and contemporary Kanuri conception of getting ahead in the world that personal advancement is not to be found in farming. Achievement in Bornu is seen as stemming out of profitable social relationships and more recently western schooling. If it is judged to be personally profitable for an individual to leave his farm work in order to become someone's client, there is little hesitation. Men asked me to take them on as clients and give them some money for trading purposes. They offered to travel anywhere in Bornu

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

438 craftsmen must sustain any and all competition from the import of goods into Ni-
439 geria. Thus native weaving has almost disappeared, as it has been unable to withstand the onslaught of milled cotton cloth from Europe and Japan.

434 Given the household nature and low productivity of most craft production in Bornu, it is interesting to ask whether many households can sustain themselves by relying on the proceeds. In rural Magumeri and surrounding villages craftsmen estimated their earnings per week from craftwork in both the dry and the wet seasons. When we compared these figures to the expenses of these same households in terms of food, clothing, ceremonies, taxes and so forth, we found that craftwork most often provides for about forty to fifty percent of the household expenses on an annual basis. In other words for rural producers craftwork is an important source of income but does not provide for the household's entire economic needs.
434 This is why almost all Kanuri outside the capital city are farmers *and* blacksmiths,
463 or farmers *and* calabash makers, or farmers *and* dyers, etc. On the other hand three kinds of people in rural Magumeri and its surrounding villages invariably get most of their income from non-farming activities. These are the political specialists or those connected by salary to the native administration, to a lesser extent the religious specialists, and to a still lesser extent many of the traders. These men tend to get higher cash incomes than the ordinary peasant craftsmen and thus do less farming.

433 When Kanuri craftsmen estimate why their productivity in household crafts
464 goes up or down, they give a number of reasons, but the one that comes up over
463 and over again concerns the loss or gain of helpers who either live in the house-
592 hold or close by. In other words the number of wives, followers, clients, sons, and
571 so on that a craftsman can depend upon to help him is in their view the largest determinant of productivity for craft enterprise.

By way of illustration let us look at a couple of cases so that we can see some of these generalizations as they apply to the lives of the people themselves.

463 KA'ANAMI, THE CALABASH MAKER Ka'anami lives in a compound with
592 four other people: his wife and infant daughter, his younger brother (same father,
159 same mother), and his father's older sister. The compound, although fully enclosed with grass mat walls, is next door to and opens into the compound of Ka'anami's father. Dolo, the younger brother, has his own farm plot on which he grows groundnuts for cash, and he makes a few calabashes now and then. The old woman, Palmatta, makes pots and cooks her own food. Dolo eats with his older brother, his father, or is given cooked food by the old woman. He used to help his father a great deal more than he does now but he still contributes now and then to both his father's and his brother's farm labor. He is doing much less of this at present and is instead contemplating marriage. He is discussing this with his brother who relays the information to their father. This involves the possibility of setting up his own household close by. Dolo still runs messages for his father and like Ka'anami feels that his father is head of a group of contiguous households within their ward of the village. Ka'anami has a "far-farm" or bush farm about three quarters of a mile south of Magumeri and three "house-farm" plots close to the hamlet of Fulongo, about two miles south of Magumeri, where he and his father used to live before the entire family moved to Magumeri. He generally harvests from twelve to fourteen bags of millet which he stores, and four to five bags of ground-nuts which he sells for cash.

700 To make calabashes Ka'anami buys dried half-gourds, then scrapes the ex-

1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

their families were not butchers in times past but conditions have forced them to "take up the knife." The craft requires anatomical knowledge of animals and a skilled use of the knife to cut and clean them. Besides this it necessitates continuous relations with cattle owners, many of whom are Shuwa and Fulani nomads who wander through the area.

Mala Bukar lives with his two wives, the younger of whom has a small child aged three, and two *tada njima* who are his apprentices. There are five huts in the compound, one each for the wives, one for Mala Bukar, one for the two apprentices, and one for meat storage. The apprentices are both unrelated to Mala Bukar by kinship, but both are the sons of butchers who are well known to him. The young boys explained that they wished to travel about the country before they settled down as butchers in their home villages. They treated Mala Bukar as they would their own father giving him all the subordination and respect due to a compound head. Mala Bukar's immediate neighbors, one to the north of him and one just to the east of him, are his younger brothers. One sells hides and skins, the other is a butcher and works closely with him although they generally butcher separately. They do, however, buy from nomads together, and often the younger brother looks after Mala Bukar's stall in the various markets they journey to together. The three brothers inherited their "house-farms" from their father. Mala Bukar—as the older brother who took over his father's household—took half while the other half was divided between the two younger brothers. Since then he has cleared one plot in free land far from town, and his apprentices are busy clearing a new one which Mala Bukar says is being cleared to replace an old one used for the last time several years ago (it is now fallow). The apprentices are also clearing small plots of their own near to the one they are preparing for the butcher and hope to get some extra cash from ground-nuts. Generally Mala Bukar estimates he obtained about ten bags (one ton) of millet and three bags (600 pounds) of ground-nuts.

The farm work itself is done by Mala Bukar's two wives and his apprentices who do not work together because it would be considered shameful for them to have to interact socially for any length of time. Mala Bukar decides on what is to be planted, when, and in what plots. He also decides on hoeing dates, and the time and scheduling of the harvest. The wives do less actual work in the field than many of their rural counterparts because of the apprentices, although they still take or send out cooked food to the boys during the hoeing season. Mala Bukar also gives his wives the hooves of slaughtered animals which they are able to sell for extra spending money.

The work schedule of the household is tied to the supply of Mala Bukar's meat and local demands for it. During the dry season he slaughters mostly sheep and goats while the rainy season which brings the cattle nomads is more heavily the time for beef preparation. He almost always butchers on Saturdays, the day before the village market day, and may do some more on Sunday if selling is brisk at the market. During Sunday he hears about conditions in the villages close by that have markets on Monday and Tuesday. If demand there seems promising, or if he has unsold stock, he attends the Monday and Tuesday markets as well.

Even with the apprentices, however, his turnover is not excessive. In the dry season he kills about four goats and/or sheep per week, and once in a while, usu-

592 pected to provide for the larger needs of members of his house-
571 hold--to provide education for the gifted, or to give a donkey or horse to a particular household member so that he may more effectively perform his tasks. The obligations of one set of the pair, the master of the house for example, becomes the expectation of his counterpart, the tata njima. Conversely the master expects that the tata njima will fulfill his obligations
567 to the household. In the case of slaves, obligations are more binding on both sides than in the case of tata njima. A master who recognizes his obligations to a slave is ultimately bound to provide for him. A tata njima who fulfills the expectations of his master can expect to be given greater responsibilities, in accordance with his master's position. However, a tata njima who does not fulfill his master's expectations (i.e., does not properly perform his obligations), can expect to have responsibilities taken from him, and less desirable tasks thrust upon
592 him. Should he radically violate his master's trust he may be
571 expelled from the household, and the relationship between tata
• 469 njima and master of the house is abruptly ended. This is far
626 more serious than merely being unemployed. An adolescent who finds himself in such a position attempts to become attached to another household, that of a less important man, in which he occupies a more lowly position. It is imperative that he be attached to some household, particularly if he is a young man with not enough savings set aside to provide for a decent luwaliram. Should he be unsuccessful in finding another household for him-

592 464 571 self, he may become part of the small but growing proletariat in the cities, who work for wages for a European company.

592 571 It is interesting to note that under normal circumstances the relationship between the tata njima and the head of a household can be perpetuated after the tata njima has married and has set up his own small household--with his wife and children. The master of his household provides him with a bride since he has paid the luwaliram, and though the tata (son) has left the compound itself, he continues to acknowledge the relationship. He does this by returning regularly to eat at his master's house. [264] Patterns of eating form wide circles encompassing many households at times, and delineating a wider network of relationships.

592 571 182 The nature of the relationship between individuals outlined here is at the core of Kanuri social structure. It characterizes a social relationship, as well as an economic and political relationship; it is repeated at every level of Kanuri society, and in slightly different form it epitomizes the nature of political relations at the state level as well.

592 To recapitulate briefly, the household as a social unit may include the following classes of people:

1. An adult married male--master of the household.
2. Remainder of the nuclear family--his wife or wives and their children.
3. Members of the extended family--elderly parents.
4. Adopted children--either given to relatives (and therefore also part of the extended family), or given to chibuna.

[GEIDAM]

925 671 land is sufficiently old so that he can sell the land if he wishes to. If a man works a piece of land for a long time (for 425 695 ten years, for example) he can sell it. But in a recent legal case a policeman who worked in Geidam was given land by the Lowan. After a year he left Geidam for Maiduguri and sold the land. The Alkali ruled that he had not had the land for a sufficiently long period of time to enable him to sell it, and forced him to return the sum of money which was paid to him by the new owner.

241 565 592 Land is farmed under a variety of conditions. Talaka farm the land themselves with the help of wives and children. A wealthy man, however, may take a very large section of farm land from the Lowan, which he will not work personally. Instead the members of his household, his many tata njima, farm his land for him. His tata njima work on the farm of the household head [465] because this is one of their duties. They receive no payment 241 565 in the form of a share of the crops for their labor. Some wealthy men may not have very large households of their own, and 464 [178] may hire day laborers to work for them. This, too, is a new approach to labor for the Kanuri. A man with a very large farm 241 427 who does not intend to use all of his land himself can rent out sections, particularly if his land is in a very favorable location. The renter pays a fixed sum to the owner, and the crops belong entirely to him. No form of share-cropping is practiced. 241 634 The Ajia of Geidam has huge sections of land alloted to him. [423] Any of his people, his slaves, his kabuna or others attached to

563 grown up as a Muslim, will only speak of his background reluctantly or
829 confidentially. Pagan groups in Kanuri towns, who are usually Banana or Gwoza peoples from the Cameroons, manifest many of the characteristics typically associated with minority groups everywhere. They often speak of the equality of all men in the eyes of God, and proclaim privately that they are just as good and deserving of dignity and respect as the Kanuri majority. Stories of unfair treatment and all kinds of unjust discrimination are easily elicited. The Kanuri, on the other hand, openly despise them, referring to them as a general class of lower status people - kurdi (infidels) who were used as slaves in the old days. Despite these status differentials, the pagans in the Kanuri towns live in a
[464] symbiotic relationship with the majority group. They supply the Kanuri
[273] with a cheap cash labour supply and brew the liquor that many Kanuri
[461] like to drink but would consider abhorpent to manufacture. The pagans obtain, therefore, a large ready market for their products (i.e. their brew, and their unskilled manual labour), because of the low regard in which these two activities are held by the Kanuri.

Pagans who are known to have Muslim sectors, such as the Babur tribe of southern Bornu or the Yoruba of western Nigeria are still regarded as low status but are not nearly so unanimously despised as the local brewers of beer with whom the Kanuri have daily contacts. It is probable that the existence of urban classes and a nobility among the Babur and the Yoruba which is originally absent among the Gwoza and the Banana, aids in differentiating their status as ethnic groups for the Kanuri.

The Ibo people of south-east Nigeria are considered to come under the rubric of the despised pagan group, although it is known that

476 Another source of labour is the serwa (co-operative work group). This is composed of a group of relatives, friends, and neighbours, not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another to farm, fix or build houses, repair compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. These serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source.

241 For the upper classes and urban farm owners, labourers (usually pagan)
464 are always available during the growing season. Many of these are local pagans living in Bornu, others are migrant labourers who have come to Bornu during the growing season to obtain their cash income for taxes.(1)

251 When the crop is harvested, food grains are taken from their stalks and stored in underground pits. Although the Kanuri utilize some aboveground storage shelters, underground storage is more widespread.

43 The cash crop (groundnuts) is sold to middlemen (sent to the bush during the harvest season to buy for traders in the city). Surplus producers of food crops store their harvest and visit markets for the rest of the year selling their produce. In Magumeri, two-thirds of the cultivators questioned in the survey were only semi-subsistence farmers. Part but not all of this is made up of income from the cash crop. Thus most people who farm have some other income-producing activity which makes up for the fact that they do not grow enough food or cash crop to maintain themselves for an entire year.

463 Craft production includes such occupations as butcher, black-
829 smith, potter, entertainer, leather worker, native doctor, hunter, dyer, lorry driver, mechanic, bricklayer. This is the Kanuri way of viewing

(1) See Kirke-Greene, A.H.M., Tax and Travel Among the Hill-Tribes of Northern Adamawa, Africa, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1956) pp. 355-369.

241 upon his farm production. One cultivator, a subordinate of the Dis-
433 trict Head, illustrated this point when he remarked that he had been
given some good land by his superior. He told how his tax collection
duties which took him away during the rainy season had severely lim-
[571] ited his ability to farm. Furthermore, as a comparative newcomer to
the town, and a supporter of such a politically powerful man as the DH
he was not welcome in a co-operative work group, and had no subordinates
or kinsmen in his own compound to care for the crops in his absence.

241
• 464 The number of wives a cultivator has available for work is
[586] a major factor in crop production. The high divorce rate makes this
primary source of labour unpredictable for each farmer from year to
[571] year.(1) Numbers and nature of bərzum subordinates again help determine
the labour supply. If a man has many followers, his labour source is
large and secure; if he has few or none, his labour problem is a limit-
[476] ing one in crop production. Membership in a co-operative work group
(serwa) may, however, help to alleviate labour problems for some, and
about 60% of the farmers and craftsmen and 35% of the trader and politi-
cal and religious specialists, use this source of supply.(2) Finally, for
those who can afford wage labour, at a price per crop, or on daily sal-
aries, such is generally available in all but the smallest towns of Bornu.

[434] The difficulty is that most peasant households are numerical-
241 ly small, and have little liquid capital. This limits the secure avail-
464 ability of labour to those with stable marriage relations, or to those
571 with long and fruitful social relations in one place, i.e. kinship ties
or working bərzum relationships with others in the same locality are

(1) See Cohen, R., Marriage Instability and its Determinants Among the Kanuri of Northern Nigeria, (1958) (unpublished).
(2) See below p. 305.

241 464 571 the surest safeguards against labour shortages due to sudden (and common) divorces. This is the reason why people with longer associations in one place, and stronger ties of kinship in the community are less vulnerable economically to the high divorce rate than newcomers, or those with their primary social ties outside Magumeri. The exception to this generalization is, of course, the upper class who can either afford to use wage labour, or utilise the subservience of followers.

433 435 Variations in price bring about fluctuations in farming activities. A higher price of millet one year induces a somewhat greater interest by rural and urban dwellers in the production of food grains. On the other hand, an increase by Government of ground nut prices paid to producers causes greater interest and some increase in acreage devoted to cash cropping. Several city dwellers who had not farmed for periods of two to six years told the writer that they were either going to go themselves, or send a subordinate, to the bush the following year to raise millet, because the 1956-57 price had risen as high as 39/- to 41/- per bag.

433 435 458 Besides this year to year fluctuation, there has been a steady rise in the Bornu economy over the past two decades. From 1938 to 1957 the prices in millet and groundnuts have been as follows: (1)

TABLE XIII

	Millet (to consumer) shillings per bag ₱	Groundnuts pounds per ton to producer ₰
1938	15	5
1957	30	33
Percentage increase	100%	660%

₱ Maiduguri market (average)
₰ General price for Bornu

[114] (1) Figures for 1938 taken from Economic Assessment Report (1938), file #3014, Bornu Provincial Government Office, Maiduguri. General prices for 1957 are taken from observations in the Maiduguri, Geidam, Damaturu and Magumeri markets.

423 rural house sites; (3) resting land which is owned through usufruct right but whose soil is depleted; (4) virgin land between settlements, 425 which is open to ownership through the operation of usufruct rights. Finally, land may be transferred through inheritance, allocation by political leaders, clearing of bush and sale or gift.

Labour

• 464 874 Besides his own efforts, the Kanuri male householder can obtain help for his craft work from apprentices, who have entered his service. On his farm he may get extra labour from: (1) his wife or wives; 241 464 476 (2) other compound members, such as apprentices, wives' relatives, or his own kinsmen or children, if these latter are old enough to contribute; (3) hired labourers who may work either on a contract price for the entire job, or by the day; (4) the co-operative work group (serwa) mentioned above. These people are not necessarily of the same age group. They help one another at farming, building and fixing houses, compound walls and other jobs requiring collective effort. Serwa are easily joined and as easily left and may have a long or a short life depending upon the interest of the members in obtaining such a labour source, as well as upon social and physical mobility of individual group members. The following table indicates the sources of labour utilized by the seventy-five farm owners in the survey.

TABLE XVIII

Table Showing Numbers and Percentages of Cultivators Utilizing the Four Kinds of Labour Sources, in the Farm Survey

Occupation	N	Men using wives		Men using others in compound		Men using labourers		Men using serwa	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
farmers	25	25	100	13	52	8	32	15	60
craftsmen	16	16	100	12	75	7	44	9	56
traders	17	17	100	13	77	12	71	6	35
political and religious spec.	17	16	94	5	29	6	35	6	35
Totals	75	74	98	43	57	33	44	36	48

241 464 593 The most striking result here is the almost universal reliance upon wives as a source of labour. The only exception in the sample was an upper class person, the headmaster of the Magumeri Junior Primary School, whose wife was confined to the compound in a marriage of seclusion. Several other figures in the table are suggestive. The relatively low percentage of "others in the compound" used by political and religious specialists (1) provokes the comment that the political specialists and a few of the religious practitioners in this group were subordinates of local political leaders. They in their turn had very few dependants or subordinates in their own compounds. The relatively low percentage of co-operative work group labour utilised by both traders and the political and religious specialists compared with the other groups (2) reflects their higher mobility and looser social ties with settled rural community life. Finally, the disproportionately high use of labourers by the traders indicates their interest in farming, but their inability to utilize traditional social relationships of kinship and/or settlement patterns to obtain labour sources, and points again to their looser integration in the local social organization.

241 592 571

241 476 571

241 464 571

511 Leaving aside urban or upper class members, the cash expenditures for the remaining fifteen rural budgets ranged from one to twelve pounds per annum for 1955-56 with four separate budgets totalling twelve pounds each for operating expenses. Taking £7.0.0 as a rough median measure of central tendency, this brings the total calculated annual expenditures for rural households in Bornu to £65.0.0 in cash values.

(1) This group is significantly different from the next lowest category in the table (farmers) at nearly the .05 level (P = 2.14).

(2) This difference is significant at the .05 level (P = 4.05) when the two top rows of serwa use are lumped and compared with the two bottom ones.